

It's a Big Problem!
Teaching Children Problem Solving Skills

[Music plays]

Dawn Williams: Hi, everyone, and welcome to today's Teacher Time. I'm Dawn Williams.

Kristin Ainslie: I'm Kristin Ainslie.

Dawn: And we are your hosts for Teacher Time. This is brought to you by the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning, and we're both curriculum specialists here and both been classroom teachers.

Kristin: All right, so hopefully if you were on a little early, you got to see our opening photo loop. And this photo loop is where we want to highlight you as teachers for sending us – photos or ideas for your activities that you do in your classroom. And so today we had two examples that were provided by teachers this month.

Our first example is Wacky Rachael, and she was provided by Nikki McClary, in Sabine Head Start in Pineland, Texas. And our second photo is provided by Heather Floyd, and she's at Highline Head Start in Seattle, Washington, at the Greenbridge site. And Heather uses these cue cards to support children in problem solving around her classroom.

Dawn: And we love it when you all send things to us, so please continue to do that. Because we know there's lots of great work going on out there, and this is a great opportunity to learn from each other and share it with you. So we will be with you for about an hour today, and we are live – live streaming again.

Kristin: Yes.

Dawn: We just love being live! And then there's also a troubleshooting link. If you have any technical difficulties at any point today, go ahead and click that link. There's a new drop-down menu there that has different topics. And when you click on it, a – a window will open up, and then you'll have some more details about what you can do to try to fix your problem. And there's also the chat box on the right-hand side of your screen. We're going to be using that later on today.

And if you have any troubles or difficulties during the webinar, you can communicate with us there and then we'll let you know when we're going to use it later.

Kristin: So, we are also on Twitter. So you can follow us before, during, after the show at #NCQTL. And we also really want to know who's here today. We know that there could be quite a few of you, and we want to know about it. And so if you would definitely remember to sign in, that's how we can keep track of your attendance.

Also by signing in, you can opt in to join our Teacher Time community. And that's where you can receive email communications from us, you can receive announcements for upcoming webinars, and it's also where we'll send you follow-up documents after this show related to what we talked about today.

Dawn: Mm-hmm. And next to that sign-in button is the evaluation button. And at the end of the webinar, this will open up later in the show, and we'd like each person to complete an evaluation for us and let us know how it went. And then, once you do that, you can choose whether or not you want a certificate. What you'll do is enter your name and email address as you want it to appear on the certificate, and then you should receive that in about a week.

Kristin: Great. So our agenda for today, we're going to go for about an hour. We will have in just a moment a presentation by Gail Joseph, and she's going to talk about teaching problem solving skills to children in the moment. And after that, we're going to have a segment called Try It Out. And this is a segment where Dawn and I will show three different video clips, and we will set them up for you and we will watch videos of Head Start teachers in classrooms really doing these skills that we've been talking about and that Gail will be talking about.

Dawn: All right, and then we will also share some resources with you. We'll put the links for those resources into the chat box and also include those in our follow-up document, and then we will end with Resiliency and Wellness.

Kristin: Ah, the best part of the show!

Dawn: It really is.

Kristin: All right, so – today's topic, as I had just mentioned, is teaching children problem solving skills. So – such a crucial thing. So Gail is going to be talking about strategies for teachers, how to help children in the problem solving process. And she's also going to talk about how we can support children in becoming more independent in their problem solving together.

So she's going to connect her information today to the strategies that we talked about in January – that she talked about in January, about helping children to really handle those strong emotions and calm down before they solve those problems. So before we get to that, let's do a poll.

Dawn: All right. So our poll question is: What types of problems do you help children solve the most in the classroom? Is it about sharing toys, having hurt feelings, entering play, transitioning? So while you all answer this poll, you will hear some music, and Gail will be back with us.

[Music plays]

Kristin: All right, so we're back now, everyone, with Gail Joseph. Welcome, Gail, and thanks for being with us today. Gail Joseph: Thanks for having me. Nice to be here.

Kristin: We're really excited to have you back again to extend sort of what we were talking about last month.

Gail: That's right. Helping children control those big feelings that they're having.

Kristin: That's right. That's right. So, Gail, what do you think about the poll results? We just took a look at them.

Gail: Well, so it seems like most of the problems that people are helping kind of intervene and solve for children is sharing toys and materials. And, you know, that resonates with me as a former Head Start teacher and preschool teacher. That certainly was where a lot of the problems were stemming from. So I'm not surprised, and we have some great strategies to help them with that.

Kristin: Excellent. Good. Well, so this is going to be great, because what Gail's going to be talking about to you all today is just this very topic. And so – we know that you're all excited to get to Gail's information, so I'll just let you take it away.

Gail: All right, thanks so much. This is one of my favorite things to talk about, is helping young children to problem solve. So I have some slides here that you'll see. So we titled this "It's a Problem! Teaching Children Problem-Solving Skills." So we do hear about problem solving a lot and that being a challenge that teachers are experiencing when they're working with young children.

All right, so I want to get right to it. What are the practical strategies? How do we teach young children, even very young children – three, four, and five – how do we teach them to start conflict resolution, some problem solving? So here's what we can think about doing. First is to teach children how to recognize when they are having a problem. And I like to emphasize this, because the first step in problem solving is to figure out what my problem is.

So let's go to these first steps. This is Peter Problem-Solver. So some people might know him from the CSEFEL materials. Peter's been with us for a while. I think he first started in a Head Start classroom we both worked in many years ago.

So here's Peter Problem-Solver. And the first step is "What Is My Problem?" Now, this is slightly nuanced. Instead of saying what is THE problem, we say what's MY problem. Because what we want young children to be able to do is to say, hey – instead of saying, you know, "The problem is he's on the tricycle," is to say, "My problem is that I really want a turn on the tricycle, and there are none available."

So that's a very different approach that someone would take than if they were just saying the problem is that he's on the tricycle, right? If the problem's that he's on the tricycle, all I want to do is get him off. If the problem is that I really want a turn on our tricycle and none are available, I might think of some other solutions there.

Gail: So that's the first step, is what is my problem? Now, the next thing that we sometimes do with young children is help them to understand, is this a big problem or is this a little problem? And we like to use this imagery of is this an elephant problem, so an elephant problem is like a big problem that needs a big person to help you solve.

And a mouse problem is a problem that you can solve on your own. So that idea of sharing toys and materials, that there's a problem around that, mouse problem. And so elephant problems are if someone's being hurt, if someone's feeling unsafe. That's when we need to have an adult, right?

So young children don't have to solve everything on their own, so we want them to recognize when is this an elephant problem? So if someone's getting hurt, we need to have a big person help you solve that. Now, we also can help children understand that things can start as a mouse problem, right?

So it can start with I – you know, there's a toy that I want to have access to, and I hit someone to gain access to it, and now we have an elephant problem. And an adult's going to have to help solve that. So this just kind of helps children understand like, "Oh, gosh, this is a big problem. I need an adult to help me." Or, "This is a mouse problem, and I got this." All right, so the next step, and this is a really important one here, is, "Think, think, think of some solutions."

So it's not just thinking of one solution. It's really helping and encouraging young children to brainstorm as many different solutions as they can think of. So here we're really trying to expand their repertoire, expand their kind of file, if you will, of different solutions that they could try in different situations.

Now, what's key here is for children to understand the difference between things that are similar and things that are different. So same and different really are important concepts here, because otherwise children will get a little bit stuck. But let me tell you how we might help children start thinking about brainstorming solutions to problems.

So one thing that's really easy to do that I'm sure you all have access to are through children's books. So you can use children's books. When the character's having a problem – maybe it's the grouchy ladybug, and they're having a problem asking nicely. So you can stop and you can ask children to just generate a lot of solutions to that problem.

Now, another thing that we can do – I brought someone with me here today. This is Ian. And one of the things that you can do – yes, he was sitting quietly – is you could bring out a puppet. So kids love puppets. And one of the things that we might – oh! One of the things that we might do is have a puppet come out and bring up a problem that's not like a – not a big interpersonal problem yet but just a problem that children could have experience helping solve.

So it might look something like this. If this was circle time, Ian might come out, and he'd be like, "Oh, ohh, I am feeling so frustrated!" Oh, wow, you're feeling frustrated, huh? "Yes!" Well, that must mean

you have a problem. "Uhh, I do. I am trying to draw a rainbow, and all I have is a blue marker! One marker, mm-hmm." Oh. Then we could say, "Boys and girls, Ian has a problem. He only has a blue marker, and he's trying to make a rainbow. Can you help him think of some ideas or, in problem-solving language, some solutions for that problem?"

And then you could have children generate different ideas. And they'll be really creative. Like he could get more markers, he could ask the teacher for more markers, he could get some paint. All of those kinds of things would be some solutions. And then Ian can – you can help solve his problem. So puppets are a great way to get kids starting to think about brainstorming. He's going to sit quietly for a moment.

And then – so then we can start thinking about in the moment. So in the moment, when children are having some problems – interpersonal problems, around like sharing toys and materials, for example, then we want them to also generate as many solutions as possible. Now, here is where it's really important for children to understand that when we say "generate as many solutions as possible," we mean as many different solutions as possible.

So I had one – in the whole time I taught, I had one little kid named Freddy, so it was my favorite name. So Freddy came up to me once on the playground – I kid you not – and he said, "Teacher Gail, I have a problem!" And I said, "Oh, my gosh, what is it?" And he said, "Jordan has the ball and he won't give it back to me!" And I said, "Oh, my gosh, that is a problem. What solutions did you try?" And Freddy said, "I tried five!"

And I was real – I was really impressed. I thought I was a really great teacher, because I taught five solutions. And so I said, "Well, what were they?" And he said, "I said, 'Please, please, please, please, please,' right? So he didn't understand that different solutions meant five different solutions from each other.

Kristin: Right. Oh, I love that.

Gail: So young children can get stuck. We can all get stuck with kind of coming up with some different ideas. So, some ways that we can support children are with some visual supports. Now, believe it or not, that is me from many years ago. Hard to recognize. But that's me, and these two boys are having a problem of exactly that, sharing material.

They both want to have access to this new book that's in the book corner. And they run out of solutions pretty quickly. They say please and they can't really think of anything else. And we don't want them to resort to what they used to do, which is to, you know, start grabbing things from each other or whatever.

So we do a solution kit. And the solution kit here, they've gotten a lot fancier since then, but that's just a laminated piece of construction paper, and – then we put different ideas on there, like you could get a timer, you could trade toys, you could ask for a turn, you could wait.

Here's another slide. I know you're going to maybe reference this a little bit later on, and I saw that Teacher Heather actually has some of these solutions in her basket, that you showed at the beginning. So these are problem solving solution cards. Again, you know, you could ask nicely, you could flip a coin, here are some other ones. I love the one "you could say maybe next time," that's a great solution.

Here's another one that you might see. It's called a bug and a wish. This is great for young children when the problem is that someone's kind of irritating them. And so we always say, "Well, did you use a bug and a wish?" So here we have the little bug with the magic wand wish. And the bug and a wish means you say, "It bugs me when you... I wish you would..." you know, stop. Or, "I wish you would do something different." "I wish you would move over. I wish you would give me a turn."

So that's one other solution I just thought I would pull out there. So after children get used to generating a lot of different solutions, the next thing we want to do is actually help them to think about what would happen next, what are the consequences of that solution before they use it. So we want them to kind of think about that, make a prediction.

And some guiding questions that are helpful for them is to say, "Well, let's see. You could ask for a turn. Would that be safe?" "Yeah." "Would it be fair?" "Yeah, sounds fair." "How would everyone feel?" "I think they'd feel okay about it." "So it's a good solution to try."

We do this because when children start generating as many different solutions as they can, some of them might be some negative solutions, right? So they might say, "Well, I could – I could grab it. I could hit him. I could kick him." And you can say, "Well, yeah, that is a solution, but would it be safe?" No, wouldn't be safe. Would it be fair? Nope, it's not ever fair for someone to be hurt. And how would you feel? Well, you would probably feel bad that you hurt them, and they would certainly feel sad and upset about that. So is that a good one? Nah, probably not."

Right, so you're giving them practice. And that's why doing some role plays is really fun, because then you can practice thinking about what the consequences would be so that they can practice that when they're calm so that it's more likely to come to them when they're in that – that moment. Okay. Now the next thing to think about is "give it a try," which is to really help children enact that solution.

Another great time to use role playing, another great time to bring some puppets out and let them practice what that solution would look like. And it also means that when we're in the moment, we really need to support children to try it out.

We also need to support children when they're starting to do problem solving by helping them understand that the first solution might not work. And maybe even the first couple of solutions might not work. So how do we encourage children to stick with it, to persist rather than just giving up or just grabbing it, because that always seems to work for them. So we're going to watch a little video. Again, some – a vintage video.

This is many, many years ago of me in a classroom actually with two young children. And you're going to see how we're trying to do this idea of supporting and encouraging this little girl, Larisha, to get through to a solution. Okay?

Kristin: Excellent. Great.

[Video begins] Gail: He won't give you the car? You really want to play with that car and he won't let you have a turn? Well, what solutions did you try?

Larisha: Share.

Gail: Well, it looks like you tried to take it from him. Was that a good solution?

Larisha: [Inaudible]

Gail: That's right, you tried to take it and he didn't give it to you, and it looks like you maybe got hurt a little bit. So was that a very good solution?

Larisha: [Inaudible]

Gail: Yeah. So what do you think you should try next?

Larisha: See if I can have a turn.

Gail: Okay, try that one.

Larisha: Can I have a turn?

Gail: Oh, man, that is such a good solution, and he still said no. He's making it tough on you, Larisha. What else can you do?

Larisha: Ask him nicely.

Gail: Okay, try that one. Wait, Frankie, just a minute.

Larisha: May I have a turn, please?

Gail: [Gasps] What did he say? You tried two really good solutions and he still said no? You are such a good problem solver. What else could you try? Where can we find more solutions at? What is that thing that Maggie had? Do you remember? What did Maggie have? She had that big suitcase. What was that?

Boy: Maggie.

Gail: Maggie had the – what did she have?

Larisha: The suitcase.

Gail: The solution kit. Should we get the solution kit? Do you know where the solution kit is, Jordan? Anthony, do you know where the solution kit is? Can you go grab it for us? We've got a case for the solution kit. Thanks, buddy. That was very helpful. All right, Larisha. Open it up.

Larisha: [Inaudible]

Gail: Which one? You really want to play with that car. Wait and take turns. That one, you would have to be so strong, Larisha. This one says you would have to wait and wait and be so strong and wait until he was done with it. You'd have to go find something else to play with and then when he was done come have a turn. I don't know. This one you'd have to be really strong for. Can you do that one? Want to see what that one is? That one says share.

Larisha: Share.

Gail: You tried sharing. Did that one work?

Larisha: No.

Gail: It's a good solution, but he didn't want to share. That one says trade. So you could say... you could say, "Hey Jordan, do you want to use this mask and then I can use the car?"

Larisha: Hey Jordan, can I – do you want to use this mask? [Video ends]

Gail: Okay, so hopefully you saw in there lots of kind of encouragement. And I think that when we're first starting to help kind of coach children through problem solving in the moment, as it's actually happening, a – couple things to keep in mind. One is that you always want to anticipate when there might be problems. So anytime there's a new toy, novel toys, things like that, somebody didn't get a good enough sleep, those kinds of things, we can anticipate they might have more problems. So we can be a little bit closer to those children in that situation.

And then – so you can see I'm really close to Larisha and Jordan right there, helping them work through. And then it's all about supporting them with visual materials. "You can think of more solutions, I know you can." And then giving them some support and ideas there with the visuals. Encouraging them. You know, "Is he making it tough on you? I know he is, but you can do it! You've already thought of all these solutions. I know you can think of some more."

Kristin: Love that.

Gail: So and then at the end, really, it's this like reinforcement and support and encouragement for them doing such a good job at persisting. So this feedback that we can give to them that, "Wow, you're doing a great job, and it's really great when you can be peaceful, when you can solve problems." And so I wanted to show you one other way in which we celebrate that. So, often we do it with, you know, smiles and high fives and hugs and just incredible enthusiasm about them starting these new skills of conflict resolution.

And so one of the other things that we came up with that year is this idea of a super friend cape. So helping children feel powerful, feel independent and powerful, which is something that young children are seeking, right, to be in control, feeling powerful, and we're taking an imagery that they really enjoy, which is super friends, superheroes, if you will, and saying, "You know what, you are a superhero when you can be peaceful."

And that's a really important message for children to get, that when you are peaceful, you are really demonstrating strength. And so I think that the super friend idea conveys that. So you're going to watch one more quick video. Again, a vintage of many, many years ago. We still have it, though. And you'll see the first kind of giving away of the super friend cape.

[Video begins] Teacher: One more. What did you say? Sonja, did you hear this? Better ask Stephanie.

Girl: [inaudible]

Teacher: So you're saying that if you can take turns, then everybody will be happy?

Boy: No, no, no. [Inaudible]

Teacher: So first you take the turn, then Stephanie takes a turn?

Boy: No. [Inaudible]

Teacher: First it's Stephanie, then Cesar, then Wanu, and then Sonja?

Wanu: Yeah!

Teacher: That is a great solution! Gail!

Gail: What's going on?

Teacher: These guys just came up with a great solution.

Gail: What did they do?

Teacher: Well, there was a problem because all the cars were kind of backed up.

Gail: Uh-huh. What did you do, Wanu?

Wanu: I finished it, and they touch it, and Wanu's turn, and Sonja.

Teacher: Wanu said they should take turns.

Gail: Are you serious? Do you think we've got one?

Teacher: I think we have a super friend.

Gail: All right, here we go. [Gail blows horn] Listen, guys, we have our first super friend of the day! Wanu, come on over here. He had a great solution to sharing the cars. Way to go, super friend. Way to go!

Teacher: Okay, so Wanu said first Stephanie, then Wanu, then Cesar, but Cesar's not here... [Video ends]

Gail: Okay, so that's just one of my... ...Favorite moments, the super friend cape.

Kristin: It's just so exciting!

Gail: I know. He's so excited and proud. And since we've done that little video clip, and of course people might recognize that you can see that on the CSEFEL website, too, we have heard from, you know, tons of teachers that have sent in some different version of doing the super friend cape or incorporating that into their everyday moments when children are engaging in this peaceful problem solving. So that idea of conveying strength by being peaceful has – has been really popular.

And this is something that somebody sent in to me. Tweety Yates actually gave this to me. Super friends at Valley View. In this classroom, this Head Start classroom, they had a parent volunteer who made all of these great little super friend t-shirts with the cape just kind of right on the back there.

I've heard from other teachers that have done entire units around being a super friend and children all declaring what their super friend power was, like, "I give great compliments," or, "I help friends in need," or, "I'm great at problem solving." And so anyways, so that is a really fun thing to help reinforce for young children, this idea of problem solving.

Kristin: Oh, I love that. I just think that kids just would love to participate in this kind of activity.

Gail: Yes, yes, it's pretty fun.

Kristin: I just think it sounds great. Well, Gail, thank you so much for being with us again today. We really appreciate all your information. I know it is incredibly useful for all of the teachers out there. So thank you.

Gail: Well, thank you.

Kristin: Yeah, good. And we'll see you just in a few moments for Resiliency and Wellness.

Gail: See you in a bit.

Kristin: All right. All right, everyone. So in just a moment, Dawn will be back with us where we will do our segment called Try It Out. So this segment, we are going to show examples of Head Start teachers, video examples of Head Start teachers in the classroom, helping children with problem solving. We're going to see lots of things that reinforce what Gail has just talked about. We're going to watch them, discuss them, and we're going to be able to dig a little deeper into the information that Gail presented on.

[Music plays]

Kristin: All right, so I'm back now with Dawn. Hi, Dawn.

Dawn: Hi! I'm glad to be back. So there are five specific strategies we're going to highlight as we're looking through these videos. They are – and I want you to think about whether or not these teachers are doing these and how they do them during the videos. So they are to anticipate what children's needs might be. It's getting close. It's the way the teachers provide support. Whether they're offering multiple solutions. And then how they might celebrate success.

Kristin: Excellent. Okay. All right, so the first clip that we're going to watch today, it's showing a teacher named Jaclynn. Teacher Jaclynn, she's going to help two boys to solve a problem. She's going to remind them some – some ways that they can solve a problem and give them some solutions. They're kind of stuck where they are now. And we're going to watch how she really does a really nice job of facilitating a conversation and sort of the resolution for both boys. So let's watch that.

[Video begins] Teacher: Or what else? What about teachers?

Max: I don't want him to talk to me that way.

Teacher: You don't like when friends talk to you that way. How does it make you feel?

Max: Sad.

Teacher: Sad. We don't want to feel sad. We want to feel happy, right? What else? If – if you are angry with a friend, you could always come to...?

Max: A teacher.

Teacher: A teacher. Because at school, we take care – we take care of friends. We take care of people, right? And I think Osmin had a message for you. Look it.

Osmin: Don't kick me.

Teacher: Did you hear that?

Max: And don't say – Don't do this to me, "Na-na-na-nah!"

Teacher: That's kind of – sounds like teasing, huh? Did you hear his message, Osmin? Max, did you hear his message about kicking? Okay, are you guys okay? Are you okay? Okay, high five. Shake. Look at that. Nice teamwork. Good job. High five. High five. Go play. Good job. [Video ends]

Dawn: So this teacher does a great job at a couple of things. She gets close, and she's also providing support. So she makes sure – sure that both the boys are heard. She gives them the space and time to do that. She really spends a nice amount of time with them to talk them through that and also facilitates the conversation between the children. So she's scaffolding and kind of modeling and setting the example of how to work through the problem successfully. And then, there is the celebration at the end, because one child actually initiates the ending handshake. Yeah.

Kristin: I love that. Puts his hand out. That's great. All right, so the second clip we're going to watch shows Teacher Carmen. And she's first going to help a little girl calm down. That's the first thing that's going to happen, because the little girl on the video, Sarah, she's very, very upset. Which often happens, you know, when children are solving problems. They're very upsetting, right? And so she's going to encourage her as she begins to then listen to her friend's ideas, and then Sarah's going to start generating some of her own ideas towards the end.

[Video begins] Teacher: I know. I see in your face, look at your eyes are crying now because it's so sad. Your lips are going down like that because you're very, very sad. I know. It's exciting to have a house like this. I know. You're very sad.

Megan: Oh, I know we can keep room.

Teacher: Look, she's thinking about a plan. What did you say, Megan?

Megan: I said we can keep room.

Teacher: We can keep room. How would we do that?

Megan: Um, we can scoot over.

Teacher: We can scoot over. And what happens when you scoot over? Who's going to come?

Megan: Maybe Aidan?

Teacher: Aidan. That is a good friend.

Sarah: And Chase and Devin. And I don't like.

Teacher: Well, look at you, you're coming back, you're calming your body down, and I can understand your words, Sarah.

Sarah: You can stay in here, and I could paint it. How about that?

Teacher: What a great plan.

Megan: I want to paint.

Sarah: Fine. We're going to do it when their turn is over.

Megan: We're going to do it together.

Teacher: We do it together, but that is a great plan, Sarah. Look at me.

Sarah: After their turn, it's going to be our turn with the house. We're going to paint it for them. They're going to protect it.

Teacher: What a great friend you are.

Sarah: So nobody else could get in.

Teacher: Look at that. So you – you're opening a room for your friends, you're sharing the house, and you're saying we'll paint the house for them. They will be so happy about it.

Sarah: Chase! You could actually come in here until we're done painting the house.

Teacher: Oh, what a great friend. [Video ends]

Dawn: That video, that one gets me right here every time we see that.

Kristin: Oh, I love the progression that she goes through, that little girl, right? It's just the teacher really helps her through it, and, yeah, it's –

Dawn: It is. She's scaffolding her all the way through. And, you know, I love how this teacher actually labels her emotions. You say you look so sad, we've got some emotional literacy going on here. And, you know, she holds back. She doesn't try to solve the problem for them. The teacher could easily step in... try to resolve that, give them solutions to do, but instead, she creates this opportunity and this space where they come up with solutions for themselves and multiple solutions on top of that.

And then, she also helps the little girl to listen to her friend's ideas. So when she's close, she – you know, she's able to get in there and meet the child where they are and facilitate them and scaffold them to the next step.

Kristin: Yeah, absolutely. It's just great. Dawn: Yeah, and then she celebrates them in the end.

Kristin: She does. It's really – I love it. Okay, so the last clip that we're going to watch shows Teacher Heather, and Heather is actually one of the teachers that we featured at the beginning photo loop. So Teacher Heather is going to help two girls to solve a problem during free choice, and just watch how the girls use the visual supports. They know where to find them, these are the same visual supports that Gail has showed in her presentation, and it just works beautifully. Let's watch it.

[Video begins] Teacher: Uh-oh, Amy and Jami, what's the problem?

Jami: I'm getting the fort.

Teacher: You're getting it to make the fort, and it looks like Amy's holding it, too. Thanks, Elena, for moving so I could get up. So what are we going to do about it? You both want the same block? What are we going to do about it? How are we going to fix the problem? I'm going to hold the block for a minute while you guys help figure it out. What's your idea?

Amy: I want to play with it over there.

Teacher: You want to play with it over there. Should we find out what Jami's idea was? What was your idea, Jami?

Jami: I want to put it there.

Teacher: Oh, and she thinks she needs it for that building. So you both need this block for two different buildings. Do you want to – do you want to look for an idea in the basket? Grab the book. See what you can come up with.

Jami: There's another one there.

Teacher: There's another one over there, right. I think Amy's got the book. What are we going to do? She's looking. So "let's play together." So that would be building the same building together. "Take a

break." So you just take a break from building. Wait until she's done. Uh, "one more minute." So she would have it for a minute, and then you would have it for a minute. You build with something else. "Maybe next time." "Playing together." So you would build it together. Do you want to build together, Jami? Look it, Amy's talking to you. Sorry, I just said it, and Amy was saying it. Sorry about that, Amy. Here. So, Amy, you're going to help – you're going to help Jami build her tower.

Amy: Building a house.

Teacher: Excellent. You guys are expert problem solvers. [Video ends]

Dawn: Well, boy, Teacher Heather does, I think, all five of those strategies we discussed right at the top of our segment here. So, again, I love how this teacher doesn't solve the problem for them but rather helps them to listen to each other. And this is anticipation. She is prepared.

Kristin: Yes, absolutely.

Dawn: Ready to go, and it looks like this is something that's been practiced before, like they're used to going through this process and they know where the solution box is and they know how to get to that. So, you know, it's great that she's so prepared and ready for this.

Kristin: Right. I think, too, I'm thinking back to the video that Gail showed as well where the little boy just knew exactly where to get the solution kit, it was something that was not brand-new to that situation, so really the amount of practice that needs to happen before with puppets and at circle time really shows how – then how easily it can happen then in the moment, right?

Dawn: Right, right. So we can capture it on video and it looks perfect and seamless, like it just magically happens. But there was some practice that happened before that.

Kristin: Right.

Dawn: All right. So now, we're going to transition into a chat question. And this is brand-new. We're going to give this a shot. We want to build upon what we've just seen and ask this question for you guys, and we'd like for you to respond in chat. So what are some solution ideas you could offer to children to put into the solution kit just like we just did in the video? And we are going to go ahead and use this to watch chat and see what your answers are.

Kristin: Great. It's going to be exciting to see what these are.

Dawn: And, you know, one of the things that we're seeing and thinking about while we were getting ready for this is, you know, we – we want to have a chance for you all to generate some ideas but also to – it's an opportunity to learn from each other.

Kristin: That's right. And all of these ideas we'll be putting in – in kind of an organized fashion in the follow-up, so you'll see a lot of ideas. And there could be brand-new teachers out there who maybe don't have a solution kit. And there also could be new teachers who like to use maybe a favorite.

Dawn: Right, right. So I saw – there's this idea about using a timer.

Kristin: Oh, yeah. Fantastic. Fantastic solution.

Dawn: Oh, yes. I see sand timer, there we go.

Kristin: That's great.

Dawn: And when you're using that chat box there, you just – in that open space next to where it says send, you just type your response in there and click send, and then it'll show up.

Kristin: Yeah, I think a sand – having timers around the classroom, I think, are really so, so key. And sometimes teachers like to use those big sand timers, sometimes a digital sand timer. But children don't know the passage of time, right? They don't know what three minutes feels like or two minutes feels like.

Kristin: It's all forever. So having that timer for them to actually see that when the timer's over, I can get a turn and then – yeah, it's really – those are great ideas.

Dawn: They really are. Uh, I see taking turns. And also a sign-up sheet for a popular item.

Kristin: Ah, love that. That's great.

Dawn: Yeah. All right, well, thanks, you all, for using the chat there. That was a fun experience for us. Um... so now we're going to talk about some resources to share with you.

Kristin: So we have lots – there's lots of resources out there for you to use with helping children with interpersonal problem solving. And so some of these you've already seen maybe, but just take another look at them kind of with fresh eyes, thinking about how you might put them and incorporate them in your classroom.

From Head Start Center for Inclusion, we have some. We have some from CSEFEL, the Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. NCQTL, we have two suites available that would really support this, Problem Solving in the Moment as well as Being Aware of Children's Needs.

Dawn: That's right.

Kristin: And then two things that Dawn's going to show. We have some really fun certificates that can be printed out from the Head Start Center for Inclusion website, and again, this is all about that celebration piece of problem solving towards the end of – of what children are doing.

Dawn: That's right. So this one is the Super Friend Award, and that's available on the CSEFEL website. And then there's also another one that's in the 15-minute in-service suite about Problem Solving in the Moment from NCQTL. So we just wanted to give you guys a visual of that. It's something that you can print out and put the child's name in and say who it's given by, and the super friend certainly fits for today.

Kristin: Excellent, yeah. Head Start Center for Inclusion, I think, yeah. So one thing I do want to tell you is from Head Start Center for Inclusion, the – sorry, the visuals that you see here, they're all free. And so we had an artist do these. They're all free. You can download them, you can cut them out, you can use them any way you want them, but we really want people to use them. And there's lots of different ways and different visuals available. So go ahead and check those out. And then –

Dawn: There's also the problem solving steps from the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations and Early Learning. That's CSEFEL, and you saw some of these visuals in Gail's presentation. But there's – there's problem solver steps that you can print out in a PDF, and there's also a PowerPoint, which gives you some instructions, support about how to do this. And so you can cut them out individually and post them around the room.

This poster in and of itself can be in a place where – in a toy area Or if you are anticipating, and you know that you're bringing in a new book or a new item, that can be posted in that area and give children some steps to follow to work through that, because everyone's going to want to play with that new item.

Kristin: That's right. I can even see these being sent home to families as well, sort of this is what we do at school and possibly it could work at home as well.

Dawn: Right. Yes. I should put this in my house.

Kristin: Yeah, exactly. I was just thinking, how can my kids use that?

Dawn: That's great.

Kristin: So – our other resource, we have some from NCQTL. We have two suites that are available on the ECLKC. So one is called Problem Solving in the Moment. And there's a lot of great information, again, what – some things that Gail talked about. There's also a certificate that you can print out and use with children giving strategies for what – really what to do in the moment when these problems arise.

And there's another suite that's called Being Aware of Children's Needs. So this is all about really just being so aware of what's happening in the classroom, those small, small moments that can, you know, start out as maybe a mouse problem and turn into elephant problems.

Dawn: Right, right.

Kristin: But just knowing how to just really be aware, anticipate, and be present in the moment for children when they need you.

Dawn: Great. And so those links were showing up in chat for you. You can access those right away. And then we'll also include them in the follow-up document that we'll give out to you all if you signed up to join our Teacher Time community.

All right, so thanks, Kristin. Right now, we are going to take a short break with another poll. If you are watching in a group, we want to know how many of you are watching with you. We know folks out there like to do Teacher Time watch parties, which is fun and exciting. So when you come back, Gail and I will return after the poll. And while you're doing the poll, you will hear some music.

[Music plays]

Dawn: And we're back. Welcome, Gail.

Gail: Hi. Thanks. It's great to be back.

Dawn: It wasn't that long ago, but I'm so glad you're back.

Gail: Not too long, but I'm in a different chair, so it feels different.

Dawn: So we are about to do our Resiliency and Wellness segment. This is one of our favorite parts of the show. It's a time where we get to focus on some strategies or skills or things that teachers can do to help take care of themselves a little bit better.

Gail: Mm-hmm, that's right. We always say that you should teach the whole child, and we really think that we should take care of the whole teacher, and so that's why we want to talk about resiliency and wellness. So before I get to what our topic is today, or our tips, if you will, for today, I want to say – I just want to reflect back on – you know, about 20 minutes ago when I was here before. You know, we saw some of that footage from my classroom, and I was just thinking about that and thinking about how I'm so grateful that those moments were captured, right?

I felt really effective in those moments and really proud of that work and work of the teachers in that classroom. And – but I have to say that there were a lot of moments that you do not see on video, and those are the real moments where instead of, you know, patiently helping and encouraging problem

solving, you know, I'm pretty sure I was sighing or rolling my eyes or those times that – that I was, you know, gritting my teeth and maybe just solving the problem for the kids, right? Like, "We'll take turns," or, "If you can't play, I'm going to take it," those kinds of things.

And I was just thinking like what – what was the difference there? What was the difference between those ineffective moments and those more effective moments? You know, was it that the children had changed? Or that all of a sudden I forgot how to do these effective teaching moves?

Dawn: Right.

Gail: And it really wasn't that. So it's actually come out recently in research, something that maybe we intuitively knew, but now we have some research to document that the difference, really, between these effective and these ineffective moments in the classroom is often caused by our own social emotional health and general well-being.

So indeed, those days that I came in to work and I was feeling tired or I was feeling depressed, or I was feeling, you know, fatigue, just low energy, not feeling well are the moments that I was not as effective. I just couldn't engage, I couldn't be as present and couldn't engage with those young children and help them through those important skills.

And the days – you know, the opposite – when I was well rested, when I was hydrated, when I felt good, I was there. I was the – you know, I was wearing the super friend cape, helping them along with those problem solving. So today's tip is to exercise, eat well, and get good sleep.

Dawn: Okay.

Gail: Because when we engage in these things, we can be better teachers, have more effective moments, okay? So I'm going to break these down just a little bit. So, you know, the benefits of daily physical activity are many and irrefutable. And so there is a huge, long list, and you can go to any kind of reputable sources to get these long lists of the benefits of daily physical activity.

And I want to just talk about a few of them. So one thing that we know is that when we engage in daily physical activity, we can decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety. We can improve our mood. We can actually increase our energy, which I think is counterintuitive. People always think like, "Well, if I'm feeling tired, I should go to sleep."

Well, maybe you should go to sleep if it's nighttime, but if it's during the day, go for a walk and see how you feel.

Dawn: And reenergize yourself.

Gail: Exactly. And it actually can give us better sleep. So if we're doing – engaging in daily activity. So just think about some ways that you could do that in your Head Start programs, right? So one thing that I've heard of some programs doing is starting a walking challenge. So they actually – all the teachers wear pedometers, and they kind of have a little contest. They're charting the number of steps they're using. They're celebrating when they get to certain numbers of steps. You know, maybe you could have classroom challenges where teaching teams are trying to kind of outstep each other, if you will.

Dawn: That's a great idea.

Gail: I think the moment you put one of those pedometers on, you just start walking more, right? So you're walking more around the classroom. Instead of just kind of scooting over or leaning over or calling kids across the room, you're actually getting up and moving and going there.

Dawn: Because you want that step.

Gail: Exactly. You want those steps.

Dawn: Yeah.

Gail: And so maybe on your 15-minute break, you take a walk around the block instead of just sitting down and looking at the computer or something. So starting a walking challenge. We've heard of people doing I Am Moving I Am Learning activities at staff meetings. Starting those out. You can of course find those on the ECLKC. Starting any kind of movement challenge. So, you know, here at the University of Washington, we actually had a faculty member that started a plank challenge.

Dawn: That's right.

Gail: So every day at noon, people were doing a little plank strength training. It only took a couple of minutes and – but it just got everyone doing some kind of movement, getting up out of their chairs or – and moving around for a little bit. We even heard of a program where they would, every – they would rotate where this was, but they would go into different classrooms after the children had left for the day and they would move out all of the furniture and they'd plug in a DVD and do exercise together, right?

Dawn: Oh, that's great.

Gail: So you can think about different things that you could do. And to find a supportive buddy that will, you know, will hold you accountable to do that walking. So daily physical activity is something that can, again, improve our energy, improve our mood, and help us be more effective in the classroom. So another one, of course, is eating healthy meals. And so eating healthy meals with children. So I was totally guilty of this, but it used to be that we would serve very healthy meals for children, as we do in Head Start, and I would maybe nibble a little bit, but the real meal was like, you know, the teacher that had made the fast food run...

Dawn: Right.

Gail: and brought all that stuff that was in the staff room. So don't do that. Sit down and eat healthy meals with children. And we're learning more and more about what we call mindful eating, which is actually taking a breath before you start eating, to actually chew your food so you can get the nutrients, the benefits of that. So, you know – so stay calm, eat healthy.

Think about a healthy-food-only policy. You know, I think sometimes teacher rooms or staff rooms or wherever it is that teachers might gather, those can be replete with things that aren't so great for us, right? Those quick bursts of energy, but things that will kind of leave us feeling fatigued and less energized over time. So maybe say, "You know, in this staff room, we want, you know, healthy food." So, you know, nuts and fresh fruit and vegetables, whatever it is that you can get as that policy.

Make sure that when you're celebrating events, you're thinking about that with healthy snacks.

Dawn: Oh, yeah.

Gail: Instead of like, "Who's bringing the donuts, who's bringing the cupcakes?" Let's sign up for the fruit skewers and the baby carrots. Now I'll never get invited to an event again, but I promise if I came, I would bring healthy snacks. And then make sure that you eat and drink water throughout the day. So water's the – you know, if you have access to healthy water, it's the best thing that you can do in terms of a beverage for yourself during the day, and make sure that you eat and drink throughout the day so that you don't do what I know I did often, is you're so busy throughout – maybe you've nibbled a little bit, but you're so busy, you're so busy, you're so busy.

You're working with the teachers, you're working with the kids, you're working, you know – talking with the parents. And then by the end of the day, you sit down and you just, like, eat everything at once. And we tend to overeat at those times, and we tend to also grab things that are going to give us quick energy but really won't keep us nourished in the long run. So making sure that you're doing that throughout the day.

And then – oh, this is my favorite one. I wish I had that pillow right now. So – so good sleep. So getting good sleep. So good sleep, again, just a huge, long list of the benefits of getting good sleep. But good sleep makes us feel rested and well for the next day. It actually boosts our immunity so we get sick less often. Also works around those – issues around anxiety.

So the average amount of sleep that somebody needs – I just read this from the Mayo Clinic website – is that you need 7.5 hours a night. That's average, though. So some people might have 6 and feel well rested. Some people might need 9. So whatever it is that makes you feel well rested when you get up, that's what you want to aim for. And if you're having difficulty with sleep, here are a couple tips. So one thing is making sure that you have a dark room. So nothing interrupts sleep as much as light. So if you

can create a dark room for yourself when you're sleeping, that's the best. Maybe even those little kind of sleep masks.

Dawn: Oh, yeah.

Gail: In fact, I saw in the classroom once the kids were making little sleep masks. It was very cute. So they're working on good sleep as well. So make it a dark room. Think about a routine. Think about a certain bedtime, just like you do for your own children. Think about your own bedtime that's going to stay consistent so that you can keep this consistent bedtime, consistent wake-up time to keep that rhythm going.

And then think about restful and relaxing things you can do right before, sleep, right? So worrying about work stress, doing bills right before sleep is probably not going to help you. So think about something that you can do right before you're going to sleep that's going to be more relaxing. And I was actually thinking that we talked a long time ago about a gratitude journal. What a nice way to go off to sleep, right?

Dawn: Oh, yeah.

Gail: To just be writing down and thinking about all the things you're grateful for. So counting your blessings instead of counting sheep would help you get a good night's sleep and wake up well rested. So again, you know, you can be the best teacher you can be when you're taking care of yourself. And so exercise, eat healthy, and get good sleep.

Dawn: Now, there's – they're really intuitive things that we think that we know, but they're not to be underestimated. And it's very hard for teachers to keep up with those things.

Gail: That's right. And small changes.

Dawn: Yeah.

Gail: You don't have to, like, run a marathon tomorrow, but you can get up and walk a little bit today, right?

Dawn: Right. Maybe pick one thing.

Gail: One thing.

Dawn: Thanks, Gail.

Gail: Thank you.

Dawn: All right. Well, hope – I know you'll be with us next month, so we look forward to that.

Gail: Yes, very exciting.

Dawn: All right. So we are going to move on to our next segment here. We're just going to wrap up and do some closing messages. Kristin will be back with me, and – we'll just give you a few final thoughts and tell you what we're doing next month.

[Music plays]

Kristin: Hi, everybody. Hi, Dawn.

Dawn: Hi. All right.

Kristin: So we want you all back with us next month. We had a lot of fun today, and we always do on Teacher Time.

Dawn: We do.

Kristin: And so next month on March 21st is our next Teacher Time show. And that topic has been chosen. It's very exciting. We – we maybe thought this would happen, but the teacher's choice is going to be challenging behavior. And so Gail is going to be with us again today. This is, I mean, clearly her area is just, you know, around all the social-emotional development. And I'm so excited to hear what she has to talk to us about of really, really digging into those – those really tough behaviors and what we can do about them.

Dawn: All right. And, again, continue to send us what you're doing in your classroom. It could be lesson plans, photos of puppets, or photos of artwork or visuals that you have in your classroom. And you can send those in to ncqtl@uw.edu. And we will have a token of appreciation for you when you do that.

Kristin: Yep, and again, we're on Twitter. So go ahead and follow us there. You can follow us before, during, after the show. Last time, last month there was a lot of activity right after the show, so go ahead and join that. It's #NCQTL. And – yeah, that's it.

Dawn: All right. And so just one more – a couple other reminders. Please sign in at the bottom of the screen to let us know that you were here today. This is just so we have a record of your attendance. And the evaluation should be opened up now. Again, once you complete the evaluation, you can select whether or not you want a certificate. And you'll need to enter your first and last name and your email address. And just be sure that the name that's on – that you enter is the name as you want it to appear on the certificate. And make sure your email address is in there correctly so we can get that to you. And you can – expect to get the certificate later next week.

And we also have recordings of previous Teacher Times available. So we know, you know, trying to find a time for teachers to watch a show is a hard thing to do, so the recordings are up there. Our production team's been fantastic and has been able to get these up about a week after the show now, so those will be available at the same link you used to get to our show today. And you can see this one starting next week.

Kristin: That's right. All right, goodbye, everybody. We'll see you next month.

[Music plays]